

The Witchcraft Sourcebook, edited by Brian P. Levack. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2015. Pp. xviii+389; 13 b/w ill. ISBN 9781138774971; E-ISBN 9781315715292.

The second edition of Brian P. Levack's primary source reader, *The Witchcraft Sourcebook*, reflects the editor's extensive experience with and expertise in early modern English and Scottish legal history and the study of witchcraft. The text also includes numerous selections from Continental sources and colonial documents from the Salem witch trials. The excerpts primarily come from legal records or treatises about witchcraft, including both Protestant and Catholic theological writings, literary tracts, and some descriptive accounts. Levack highlights cases pertaining to individuals from varying social strata as well as communities large and small. His organization is primarily thematic with some apparent chronological considerations. Through this well-organized, cohesive, and balanced book, Levack provides his audience with a full and nuanced understanding of the causes of the early modern witch trials, the methods of operation, consequences for the accused and their communities, and reasons for their decline.

The book includes eight parts, each comprised of excerpts that run between approximately 750 to 3500 words. The length of the selections allows for the volume to successfully convey both breadth and depth of knowledge without overwhelming the intended undergraduate audience. Part 1 is a selection of ancient material, both classical and biblical. High and late medieval documents comprise part 2. The third part includes selections from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts on demonology while part 4 focuses on trial methods and punishment up to the conclusion of the witch trials. Parts 5 and 6 contain records of specific, early modern cases. Part 7 comprises source material linking possession and witchcraft, and the final part includes skeptical treatises. Contemporary illustrations that depict concepts mentioned in the sources are interspersed throughout, including, for example, Hans Baldung Grien's *The Bewitched Stable Groom*, a woodcut showing the pact with the Devil, and engravings of the Witches' Sabbath.

New to this edition are recommended reading lists and eleven documents. Levack removed excerpts from early modern dramas portraying witchcraft that concluded the first edition of the sourcebook to provide space for the new selections concerning trial proceedings. In the first edition of the book these selected dramatizations felt like an afterthought tacked on to the end of the text whereas the revised second edition draws to a logical conclusion with the

skeptical tradition. The elimination of these readings is not a significant loss. The editor has also reorganized the book to include a new section 6, which is exclusively comprised of documents related to trials in England, Scotland, and the North American colonies. This useful organization both establishes distinctions between the operations of Continental and British trials and highlights differences among trial proceedings in the British world. Section 5 is now confined to Continental texts and includes new material from Norway, Germany, and Poland.

Reading lists of five to ten monographs that appear in each part are balanced in terms of time and space and reference classics in the history of ancient, medieval, and early modern European magic and witchcraft, including works by Jeffrey Burton Russell, Richard Kieckhefer, Carlo Ginzburg, Keith Thomas, James Sharpe, and Malcolm Gaskill. Undergraduates new to the study of European witchcraft and who are looking to do further research will find these lists particularly helpful. Nevertheless, absent from these recommendations are some of the significant historiographical contributions that specifically examine beliefs about witchcraft through the lens of gender, like Marianne Hester's *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study in the Dynamics of Male Domination*, Deborah Willis's *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England*, or Heidi Breuer's *Crafting the Witch: Gendering Magic in Medieval and Early Modern England*.

Strengths of the volume include Levack's succinct introduction, background material provided at each section's beginning, and commentary that introduces individual excerpts. The author avoids advancing a singular explanation for the causes of accusations. Indeed, Levack's choice of documents points to a variety of intertwined causes for the trials, although he does note that the witch hunts had an obviously gendered dimension. He additionally and helpfully provides his audience with a precise definition of witchcraft as the practice of "maleficent magical power by virtue of having made a pact with the Devil" (2). His overviews are effective scaffolding as they connect ancient and medieval writings about magic with the early modern texts included in the reader. Excerpts from Horace's *Epodes*, for instance, shaped dramatic representations of witches into the early modern age while the biblical story of the Israelite king, Saul, and the witch of Endor provided a basis for later theological commentaries linking magic to diabolism. Levack centers the high and late medieval theological foundations for accusations of witchcraft and texts that shaped the early modern, stereotypical witch as a diabolical, heretical practitioner of black magic. For example, he has chosen for inclusion Thomas Aquinas's comments on demonic magic, the

articles issued by the faculty from the University of Paris in 1398 denouncing magical practices, and a selection from the inquisitorial handbook, the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Furthermore, Levack astutely avoids summarizing the documents in their entirety for the reader. Instead, he briefly introduces the authors (and/or subjects), explains the conditions under which the texts were written, and highlights the impact and historical significance of these publications.

The Witchcraft Sourcebook provides the reader with a proportionate use of text and image, selections that offer a refined reading of beliefs about witchcraft from a diversity of perspectives, and linkages between ancient, medieval, and early modern notions of magic and witchcraft that illuminate the evolution of witch beliefs over the centuries. It is most appropriate for an undergraduate survey course on the early modern witch trials, or a seminar. This sourcebook could be used in conjunction with a textbook (like Levack's companion text) or, given the clarity of Levack's introductory material, can easily function as a stand-alone text. The range of selected texts will facilitate comparative analyses and fruitful discussion of and debate over causes of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century witch trials including socioeconomic concerns, psychological issues, religious and political matters, and misogyny. The editor has obviously thought carefully about undergraduate needs and heeded the recommendations of instructors who worked with the first incarnation of the book to design an extremely useful and balanced second edition.

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